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ABSTRACT

This study used multiple regression analyses to identify the socioeconomic, demographic and attitudinal correlates of neighborhood differences in the rate of child abuse and neglect. Comparison of actual vs. predicted rates defined high- and low-risk neighborhoods. These "risk scores" then become variables for inclusion in additional neighborhood-level analyses, as well as in analyzing family-level interview data concerning stresses and support systems. A pair of neighborhoods matched for sociceconomic level was selected, one high-risk, the other low-risk. Interviews with expert informants ranging from elementary school principals to mailmen were used to develop neighborhood profiles. Samples of families were drawn from each neighborhood, and interviews conducted to identify stresses and supports, with special emphasis on sources of help, social networks, evaluation of the neighborhood and use of formal family support systems. The results lend support to the neighborhood risk scores. Families in the high-risk neighborhood, though socioeconomically similar to families in the low-risk neighborhood, report less positive evaluation of the neighborhood as a context for child and family development. Furthermore, they reveal a general pattern of "social impoverishment" that parallels findings at the neighborhood level. (Author)

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High-Risk Neighborhoods and High-Risk Families:

The Human Ecology of Child Maltreatment

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High-Risk Neighborhoods and High-Risk Families:
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Abstract

Using child maltreatment as an indicator of family distress, research has focused on identifying high- and low-risk neighborhoods. This assessment has relied on multiple regression analyses identifying the socioeconomic, demographic and attitudinal correlates of neighborhood differences in the rate of child abuse and neglect. These factors account for 53% of the variance among the 93 census tracts in the target community (Omaha, Nebraska). Comparison of actual vs. predicted rates defines high- and low-risk neighborhoods. These "risk scores" then become variables for inclusion in additional neighborhood level analyses, as well as in analyzing family level interview data concerning stresses and support systems.

Neighborhood risk scores have been used to identify settings for in-depth research on family support systems. A pair of neighborhoods matched for socioeconomic level was so selected, one high-risk, the other low-risk. Interviews with expert informants ranging from elementary school principals to mailmen were used to develop neighborhood profiles. Samples of families were drawn from each neighborhood and interviews conducted to identify stresses and supports, with special emphasis on sources of help, social networks, evaluation of the neighborhood and use of formal family support systems. The results lend support to the neighborhood risk scores. Families in the high-risk neighborhood, though socioeconomically similar to families in the low-risk neighborhood, report less positive evaluation of the neighborhood as a context for child and family development. Furthermore, they reveal a general pattern of "social impoverishment" that parallels findings at the neighborhood level.

I. Introduction

Commenting on domestic violence in the animal world, Desmond Morris (1970) makes the following observation:

> The viciousness with which children...are subjected to persecution is a measure of the weight of dominant pressures imposed on their persecutors.

Complementing this observation is Rock's report (1978) that when gorilla mothers are socially impoverished by being isolated from their peers, they have a striking propensity to mistreat their infants. When restored to the simian community, these mothers perform adequately, however. Social impoverishment is equally detrimental to human childrearing (see Garbarino, 1977; Garbarino and Crouter, 1978a). Both child abuse and neglect are associated with isolation of the parent-child relationship from the nurturance and feedback provided by "potent, prosocial support systems." For example, Polansky and his colleagues (Note 1) have demonstrated the pervasive estrangement and withdrawal of neglecting families. Their social impoverishment is intertwined with a psychology that Polansky refers to as "the Apathy-Futility Syndrome."

Any comprehensive review of the available evidence leads to the conclusion that child maltreatment is concentrated among socially, economically and psychologically "high-risk families." Indeed, recent evidence by Elmer (1977) suggests that the childrearing environments represented by these high-risk families exert a destructive influence on development <u>even when specific acts of mistreatment are not present</u>. Whether it be cognitive functioning, physical health or emotional robustness, life for and in these "high-risk" families poses a threat to the welfare of the children that grow up in them (cf., National Academy of Science, 1976).

High-risk families are not the whole story, however. To understand the forces that impede adequate child development we must go further to identify and investigate high-risk environments. Families both shape their social surroundings and are shaped by them. This interactive process can enhance or undermine family functioning. Socially impoverished families may be particularly vulnerable to socially impoverished environments and susceptible to amelioration in socially rich environments (Garbarino and Sherman, Note 2). We certainly must deal with high-risk families in our conventional American individualist model by maintaining programs to study, serve, support and regulate them. Nonetheless, we need to go further to study and serve these families in context. For many practical purposes, this means that we must examine high-risk neighborhoods as well as high-risk families. Additional conceptual and rehabilitative domains are opened when we consider levels of analysis higher than those of the individual, the parent-child dyad and the family. To do this we must become conversant with the human ecology of family life.

This paper presents a small-scale investigation of the human ecology of family life as it relates to childrearing and the parental role. Rather than focusing on "optimal childrearing patterns," as our research so often does, it concerns itself with the degree of risk for inadequate child care, abuse and neglect. Recent research by Polansky and his colleagues (1978) reveals that while there is substantial variation across class and professional/lay lines in the matter of defining optimal childrearing, there is a high degree of agreement when it comes to the definition of inadequate care. This congruence of values permits us to go forward to analyze the human ecology of child care with increased confidence. Where inadequate child care exists it is likely to be the result of a general inability to

function and an imbalance of stress over support. This lends still further credence to the notion of high-risk environments and socially impoverished settings as significant influences in the lives of children.

The present study is designed to validate the concept of "social impoverishment" as a characteristic of high-risk family environments. It builds upon previous work designed to identify the environmental correlates of child maltreatment (Garbarino, 1976; Garbarino and Crouter, 1978a). This earlier work provided an empirical basis for "screening" neighborhoods to identify high- and low-risk areas on the basis of the discrepancy between actual and predicted rates of child maltreatment. Data were assembled to validate the hypothesis that neighborhoods identified as high-risk using this strategy are indeed socially impoverished (Garbarino, Crouter and Sherman, 1977; Garbarino and Sherman, Note 2). The present study examines a pair of neighborhoods, one high-risk and the other low-risk for child maltreatment, matched on socioeconomic characteristics. It tests the hypothesis that although socioeconomically matched, the two neighborhoods present contrasting environments for childrearing. Relative to the low-risk area, the high-risk neighborhood is hypothesized to represent a socially impoverished human ecology. This hypothesis is subjected to an empirical test using data from a small-scale interview study of family stresses and supports in the two neighborhoods.

II. Background of the Study

A previous study (Garbarino and Crouter, 1978a) examined the socioeconomic and demographic correlates of child maltreatment rates across neighborhoods within a midwestern metropolitan county. A multiple regression approach incorporating two socioeconomic variables and three demographic variables was used.

Socioeconomic variables:

1. percent of families with income less than $8.000 a year
2. percent of families with incomes more than $15,000 a year

The study thus sought to identify qualitatively different socioeconomic life styles rather than treat income as a linear continuous variable. In this way the analysis paralleled other efforts to give social meaning to income differences (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1975; Garbarino, 1975; National Academy of Sciences, 1976).

Demographic variables:

3. percent of families headed by women
4. percent of married women (with children under 6) in the work force outside the home
5. percent living in current resident less than one year

These indicators reflect the stresses on women both directly, as in having to be both caregiver and labor force participant, and indirectly, by having the disruption of social networks that accompanies moving. They thus provide an index of how much neighborhood residents are "free from drain" (Collins and Pancoast, 1976). This is a key factor in the potency and effectiveness of natural helping networks.

The results strongly support the proposition that child maltreatment, at least as reported, is closely related to these socioeconomic, demographic, and economic variables. Economic factors alone account for 38% of the variance for the 93 neighborhoods (census tracts; r = .62). With the addition of the variables reflecting stress on mothers and geographic mobility, the equation accounts for 48 percent of the variance (r = .64). The earlier study describes steps taken to assess the validity of the reporting system and the resulting child maltreatment data (see also, Garbarino and Crouter, 1978b).

This multiple regression approach was used to identify neighborhoods in which the actual rate of child maltreatment and the rate predicted by the socioeconomic variables differed substantially (Garbarino, Crouter and Sherman, 1977). This screening procedure involves plotting predicted rates against actual rates, and thus represents visually areas with large residuals. Areas with higher actual than predicted rates are termed "high-risk neighborhoods," while areas with substantially lower actual than predicted rates are designated "low-risk neighborhoods." Having done this we were then in a position to use these "risk scores" as a basis for further research.

Specifically, we used the neighborhood risk scores in two ways, both of which were intended to shed further light on the "ecological" conception of child maltreatment underlying the entire research program (Garbarino, 1977). First, we examined the correlates of neighborhood risk (Garbarino and Sherman, Note 2). Second, we used the risk scores to identify two neighborhoods for intensive analysis as case studies of contrasting human ecologies for parent-child relations.

Before proceeding to the results of the two neighborhood case study, a brief review of the other risk score analyses is in order. These analyses relied on two sets of data. The first included socioeconomic and demographic information obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and local governmental sources, plus the results of a survey conducted by the Center for Applied Urban Analysis (C.A.U.R., 1973). The second source of data was an interview study of family stresses and supports conducted by the authors (Garbarino and Sherman, Note 2). These data lend credence to the validity of the "neighborhood risk score." The risk score was found to be uncorrelated with the battery of socioeconomic and demographic factors that

usually account for variance for families (cf., National Academy of Sciences, 1976). The algebraic origins of the risk score would itself tend to produce this finding, of course. But it is worth noting in any case because it focuses attention on the fact that in discussing neighborhood risk we are not simply examining socioeconomic factors under an assumed name. The risk factor operates independently of conventional socioeconomic variables.

The risk score is associated with important aspects of family stresses and supports as perceived and reported by mothers in the interview study. The interview includes open-ended questions on important aspects of family life complemented by nine point global ratings. The eleven areas covered include finances, health, child care and sources of help. The risk score was found to be significantly correlated with the parent's overall rating of the neighborhood as a place to raise children ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), even after controlling for family income and structure. This finding is based on a sample of 87 families drawn from the metropolitan county. It represents a correlation between individual level and neighborhood level data. In human terms, it indicates that parents are sensitive to the way neighborhood factors establish a particular climate for families and parent-child relations. Once again, this relationship is independent of major conventional socioeconomic and demographic indices. A second finding from this analysis merits noting here. The interview provides an indication of a family's use of preventive and recreational community services (e.g., Boy Scouts) as opposed to treatment and rehabilitative services (e.g., Family Service Association). The neighborhood risk score is significantly correlated with the use of treatment versus preventive services ($r = .24$, $p < .05$). This finding provides further support for the hypothesis that the

risk score is an index of neighborhood social quality. High-risk neighborhoods are socially impoverished neighborhoods. In this hypothesis is called to mind Kromkowski's (1976) analysis of neighborhood quality.

> The organic life of a neighborhood, created by the persons who live in a particular geographic area, is always a fragile reality. A neighborhood's character is determined by a host of factors, but most significantly by the kinds of relationships that neighbors have with each other. A neighborhood is not a sovereign power--it can rarely write its own agenda. Although neighborhoods differ in a host of ways, a healthy neighborhood has some sort of cultural and institutional network which manifests itself in pride in the neighborhood, care of homes, security for children, and respect for each other. (Kromkowski, 1976, p. 228)

Our research explores the relationship among these four factors, with special emphasis on "security for children" and "respect for each other." With this discussion as an introduction, we can proceed to our analysis of two neighborhoods chosen to represent economically equivalent but socially divergent settings for parent-child relations.

III. Design and Method

To conduct a preliminary empirical test of the hypothesis that an area's risk score is an indicator of social impoverishment we selected a pair of neighborhoods from the 93 contained in the multiple regression screening analysis. The criteria for selection were three: a) large discrepancies between actual and predicted child maltreatment rates; b) high child maltreatment rates; and, c) similar socioeconomic and ethnic/racial profiles. Using these criteria we selected two neighborhoods for further study. Table 1 conpares them on several relevant dimensions. As can be seen, we were fortuitously able to identify a nicely matched pair

--Table 1 about here--

of neighborhoods, one high-risk for child maltreatment, the other low-risk.

Having made our selection we proceeded with a two-stage program of data collection. First, we conducted interviews with "expert informants" about the two neighborhoods as settings for parents and children. These informants included public health nurses, elementary school principals, mailmen, Girl Scout leaders, policemen, clergy, staff of the City Planning Department, and others who had first-hand knowledge of life in the two areas. Naturally, all informants were kept "blind" to the purpose of the interview and to the risk scores. On-site inspection of the neighborhoods by the investigators complemented the interviews with informants. Table 2 presents some illustrative comments and observations from the interview protocols, organized around eight dimensions of neighborhood and family life. The results supported our overarching hypothesis. The high-risk neighbor-

--Table 2 about here--

hood does present a picture of social impoverishment relative to the low-risk neighborhood. These results provided a foundation for more formal data collection about the life of parents and children in the two settings.

Having developed an informal picture of the two neighborhoods on the basis of expert informants, we set about assessing the neighborhoods in terms of experiences and attitudes of individual families within them. We did this through an interview study of family stresses and supports using an instrument based on the work of other investigators concerned with the human ecology of family life (Bronfenbrenner, Avgar and Henderson, Note 3; Cochran and Brassard, in press; Holmes and Rahe, 1967; Warren and Warren, Note 4). The interview involves open-ended questions and ratings in eleven areas of family life with an emphasis on child care, an assessment of family social networks, an assessment of demands for social readjustment, and a variety of items to assess the availability and use of both formal

and informal support systems. (The interview is available from the senior author.)

We randomly sampled from the pool of families with children under age 18. Twenty-two families in the high-risk area and twenty-four families in the low-risk area were interviewed. These families were identified by in-person recruitment. By avoiding the use of telephone canvassing we hoped to avoid excluding families who had no phone or were resistant to impersonal contact, a high-risk group of particular interest in this study. The sample represents 8.3% of the total number of families in the high-risk area and 7.4% of the families in the low-risk area. In all cases mothers were interviewed by a specially trained research assistant who was blind as to the risk score of the neighborhood. Analysis of the background data for the 46 families indicates a nearly identical distribution of income levels between the high- and low-risk neighborhoods. This reinforces the matching of the two areas on the basis of neighborhood level economic data.

IV. Results

The data are organized to present a series of comparisons between the high- and low-risk neighborhoods. The results, presented in Tables 3-5, support our hypothesis. A consistent pattern emerges in which the high-risk neighborhood may be characterized as socially impoverished relative to the low-risk neighborhood. The pattern is particularly evident in those areas most closely related to parent-child relations and child care. The relatively small sample size reduces the statistical significance of some findings, but the overall pattern is clear. Overall, of some sixty comparisons, more than forty are in the predicted direction, while only five are in reverse of the predicted direction (Garbarino and Sherman, Note 2).

All the statistically significant findings reveal results consistent with the hypothesis predicting greater social impoverishment in the high-risk neighborhood. In this report we concentrate on some thirty findings that most directly bear on child care and parent-child relations.

Table 3 presents data on the child's social resources, specifically the role of child care in the pattern of neighborhood exchange and the parent's description of the child's social network. The results suggest that

--Table 3 about here--

parents in the low-risk area, and particularly mothers themselves, assume more exclusive and direct responsibility for child care than do parents in the high-risk neighborhood. The absence of "latchkey children" in the low-risk neighborhood is perhaps the best illustration of this pattern.

When it comes to using the neighborhood as a resource for the child, it appears that parents in the low-risk area do more of this than do parents in the high-risk area. There is more exchanging of child supervision and more use of other neighborhood children as playmates. Mothers in the high-risk area are less likely to engage in neighborhood exchanges generally. Thus, it appears that mothers in the low-risk area assume full responsibility for their children but also use the resource of the neighborhood. Families in the low-risk area basically take care of themselves, and it is that context of relative self-sufficiency that they call upon others. This means the neighborhood is relatively "free from drain" (Collins and Pancoast, 1976). In the high-risk area there is less self-sufficiency, less reciprocal exchange and generally less adequate provision of child care. The data on the maternal perception of the child's social network reveal significantly more people that can be counted on in the low-risk area. What is more, these contacts are more likely to include people not part of the mother's own network.

Table 4 presents data on the demands for social readjustment facing the family, and the use of informal and formal helpers in response to those demands. The Holmes-Rahe Readjustment Scale is particularly relevant to

--Table 4 about here--

our interests because previous research has linked a high score ("major crisis") to child abuse (Justice and Duncan, 1976). Thus, it is significant that the mean score for families in the high-risk neighborhood is 258 (in the middle of the "moderate crisis" range) while for families in the low-risk neighborhood it is 166 (at the lower end of the "mild crisis" range). Moreover, 37% of the families in the high-risk neighborhood are in the "major crisis" category as opposed to only 16% in the low-risk neighborhood. The only striking difference between the groups in the use of help to cope with demands for social readjustment is that mothers in the low-risk neighborhood are more likely to include professionals among the people they call upon for assistance than are mothers in the high-risk area. Given the lower level of stress in the low-risk area this seems consistent with the finding that families in the low-risk area are more likely to use the social resources available to them, but in the context of a relatively low level of need. This is opposed to the high-risk area where there is high need and "incomplete" use of helping resources.

Table 5 presents the maternal ratings of family stresses and supports. In all cases, the ratings are made after open-ended questions have provoked discussion of the topic. Of the eleven areas, three present statistically

--Table 5 about here--

significant differences. Mothers in the low-risk area rate their neighborhood as a better place to rear children than do mothers in the high-risk area (1.66 vs. .09). They likewise rate the availability of child care

more positively (3.04 vs. 2.19) and their children themselves as easier to raise (1.29 vs. 2.43 on a scale where +5 means "difficult"). Of the remaining ratings, seven "favor" the low-risk neighborhood and three the high-risk area.

V. Discussion and Conclusions

Our goal in this research has been to illuminate the human ecology of child maltreatment. This interest led to the "mapping" of cases and of family environments. Out of this mapping approach grew the multivariate procedure for screening neighborhoods to assess the degree of risk. The neighborhood study described here is an attempt to validate the "social impoverishment" hypothesis, and shed further light on the meaning of social risk when it comes to assessing the proximal environment of families. What emerges from the data is the conclusion that the dynamic between family resources and family needs is a complex matter. Those who need the most tend to be clustered together in settings that struggle to meet those needs. The picture that emerges from the high-risk area is one of very needy families competing for scarce social resources. The very high level of need compounds the problem of scarce social resources, of course. In their studies of informal helping networks Collins and Pancoast (1976) use the concept "free from drain" to describe people who can afford to give and share. These people can afford to give and share because the balance of needs and resources markedly favors the latter. The low-risk area seems "free from drain" in many respects. People "keep up" their houses and their families. Therefore, they can afford to become involved in neighborly exchange without fear of exploitation (and they do so, according to our data). Houses and families are much more "run down" in the high-risk

neighborhood. In such a stressful environment, we believe that parents are inclined to seek an advantage by getting all they can from others while giving as little as they can get away with. There is ambivalence about neighborly exchanges and a recognition that, overall, the neighborhood exerts a negative effect on families (as illustrated by the low rating given to the neighborhood as a place to raise children and by the lack of interaction among the children).

Is the high-risk neighborhood "socially impoverished"? From our perspective, the high-risk neighborhood presents a disturbing picture. In many respects it resembles what Pavenstedt (1967) described in her study of "the drifters: children of disorganized lower-class families," what Elmer (1977) observed in her longitudinal study of child maltreatment, and what Maccoby and her colleagues (1958) saw in their comparison of two neighborhoods, one high-risk for juvenile delinquency, the other low-risk. Families in the high-risk neighborhood are struggling. The observations of our expert informants make it clear that family life is threatened from within and without. Our conclusion would match that offered by the mothers in the interview study. The high-risk neighborhood is <u>not</u> a good place to bring up children. A family's own problems seem to be compounded rather than ameliorated by the neighborhood context, dominated as it is by other needy families. This pattern is confirmed in other data that show troubled families to be more strongly influenced by neighborhood context than are successful families (Garbarino and Sherman, Note 2). Under such circumstances strong support systems are most needed, but least likely to operate, of course. The high-risk area cries out for outside intervention to increase its capacity to fend for itself, and to strengthen families so as to reduce the demands they place on already tenuous informal helping

networks. The irony, of course, is that it is usually just such needy families and neighborhoods that are hardest to serve and organize, as the experience of our expert informants makes clear.

Students of child development are increasingly turning to "family support systems" as topics for research and intervention (cf., Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Cochran and Brassard, in press; Kessen, 1978). This work inevitably leads to the neighborhood as a unit of analysis and focal point for service, as our concerns are expanded to include "macro-structural" influences on child development (Brim, 1975). Our study is designed to provide students sympathetic to the "ecological perspective" (cf., Garbarino, 1977) with some of the conceptual and methodological armamentarium necessary to translate theoretical and policy perspectives into research practice. The present study, while conducted on a small scale, does offer the hope that we can make progress towards this important but ambitious goal.

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TABLE 1: Neighborhood Profiles

	HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
A. MALTREATMENT REPORT DATA		
Child Maltreatment Rates 1976 (per 1000 families)		
Actual	130.4	15.6
Predicted	68.6	66.2
Risk Score	+61.8	-50.6
Maltreatment Rates 1973-1975 (per 1000 families)	53.8	17.2
Number of Maltreatment Cases		
1976	26	5
1973-1976	43	18
B. DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION		
Size- (1975 data) Number of families	266	349
Income- (1975 data) % below 80% of median	72%	72%
Ethnicity- (1970 data) % White	100%	100%
Occupation- (1970 data) % professional or managerial	18%	26%
Education- (1970 data) % high school graduates	44%	36%
Family Status- (1970 data) % of families with children under 18	43%	48%

Table 1 (continued)

	HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
C. MOTHER CAREGIVER & WORK ROLES		
% Working women (1970 data)	44%	39%
% Working women with children under 6 (1970 data)	37%	32%
% Children under 5 in nursury school (1970 data)	40%	20%
% Female-headed households (1970 data)	18%	12%
D. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY RATING		
% Dilapidated housing (1975 data)	0%	0%
Neighborhood Development Index (1975 data) (1=growing; 5=deteriorating)	5	4
% in same house five or more years (1970 data)	35%	56%

TABLE 2: Profiles of Social Life in Two Neighborhoods Based on Expert Informants: Selected Comments and Observations

1. Neighborhood Public Image

Low-risk "That's one of the most sedate areas." (Police officer)

"That's a good quick area." (Postman)

High-risk "That's a little less tranquil. The bars are just pits. The crowd is Hoodlums, Hells Angels and cowboys." (Police officer)

"There's a lot of 'night activity' there." (Visiting nurse)

2. Neighborhood Appearances, Housing, Public Notices

Low-risk "The housing, mainly single family homes, is kept up well. Home-improvement activities apparent. Empty lots are usually mowed, cared for, and look as though they are used as play areas." (D. Sherman's observation)

High-risk "It's low rent there. They don't have good locks. There are no screens on the windows. Cockroaches are all over. We're concerned about the children's safety since the second floor windows are without screens." (Visiting nurse)

"FOR SALE and APARTMENT FOR RENT signs dot the neighborhood. BEWARE OF THE DOG signs are also noticeable." (D. Sherman's observation)

3. Social Characteristics

Low-risk "This is a solidly middle-income area, and upwardly mobile. There is a tendency to change to private doctors and to see our organization as for low-income groups only." (Visiting nurse)

High-risk "There is a dichotomy in the neighborhood. There is a significant number of rather stable, well-put together families that live in their own homes. Then there is the other group of people (and they comprise about half of the students) who are living in apartments or who rent broken-down homes. They kind of move in and out of the neighborhood. There are a number of families where we'll have the kids for three or four months, they will leave and then we'll have them again." (Principal of an elementary school)

Table 2 (continued)

4. Neighborhood Change or Stability

Low-risk "I see it as a stable neighborhood. People have roots in the neighborhood. It's not a very mobile place." (Visiting nurse)

High-risk "The parents cling to this school as a sign of hope. The neighborhood is facing a lot of change and deterioration.... They probably felt threatened by the construction of the Interstate through the neighborhood.... Just this year we've had several new cases of loiterers, and some families report burglaries where they have never happened before.... The parish bought up a building opposite the school which had been recently turned into a rough place." (Principal of a parochial school)

5. Neighborhood Lifestyle and Quality

Low-risk "We have very few cases there, only six families with children." (Visting nurse)

High-risk "That's an area that needs plenty of scrutiny as far as quality of life." (Director of a neighborhood community center)

"There's stealing from each other." (Visiting nurse)

"That's one of our heaviest caseloads, both as number of families and as problems within each family. Alcoholism is quite a big problem.... There are mental health problems, a very high death rate, a high birth rate to unmarried mothers, poor nutrition...medical knowledge is only of emergency care...many of the girls are early school drop outs." (Visiting nurse)

6. Child Abuse and Neglect

Low-risk "There used to be a number of cases there, but now it will be real hard to find one." (Child Protective Services worker)

"I would say that child abuse and neglect is not as much a problem in the area as in others. Most of the referrals are for neglect--about 80%." (Visiting nurse)

High-risk "There are probably a significant number of 5-8 year olds at school who got themselves up this morning. They may or may not have been at their own homes, but they got themselves to school and took care of their needs." (Elementary school principal)

"There were probably about six to eight suspected cases of physical abuse last year. We see neglect cases maybe 25 to 30 times a year at X school, and as high as 50 times in Y school." (Elementary school principal)

Table 2 (continued)

7. Neighborhood Involvement of Families

Low-risk "Z school has an active, ongoing Girl Scout Troop." (Girl Scout leader)

High-risk "X and Y schools are just beginning to be organized by our field workers." (Girl Scout leader)

"About 35% of the parents are active with the school. On a scale from +3 to -3 I'd rate the level of activism as 0." (Principal of parochial school)

"We have the least amount of input from them compared to other centers...we're not as close to that neighborhood. Nobody is." (Director of Community Center)

8. Social Relations-Informal Supports

Low-risk "These women often rely on the help available to them through their families. One client of mine lives next door to her mother-in-law whom she turns to for help." (Visiting nurse)

High-risk "The family unit is not real strong here." (Parochial School Principal)

"The women sometimes form a buddy system, but there is not a lot of interlinking between them...they don't know very many people. They don't associate very much. They don't have a lot of family supports. They may be on bad terms with the family. This area is sometimes a hide-out place for them...there are a lot of teenage girls with their babies who want to get away from their families downtown." (Visiting nurse)

"People don't trust each other much...there is stealing among some of the neighbors, while there is some help among the mothers." (Visiting nurse)

TABLE 3: The Child's Social Resources

A. Childcare Arrangements

	HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
1. "Latchkey" - Caregivers Present When Child Returns Home from School	n = 16*	n = 21*
No one	13%	0%
Parents	25%	86%
Siblings, relatives	25%	10%
Neighbor	12%	0%
Babysitter	25%	4%

* not applicable to children more than 12 years old

2. Caregiver When Child Home From School Due to Sickness	n = 19*	n = 21*
Child care for himself	5%	0%
Mother/mother & other	70%	91%
Father, relative or neighbor	25%	9%

* others reported no illness

3. Substitute Care When Parent is Ill	n = 13*	n = 10*
Other parent	38%	40%
Relative, sibling	38%	40%
Babysitter, neighbor	23%	20%

* others reported never being seriously ill

B. Neighborhood "Exchange" System

	HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
1. General Exchanges		
Never ask for anything	32%	8%
2. Exchange Child Supervision	30%	54%
3. Neighborhood Children Serve as Playmates	40%	86%

Table 3 (continued)

C. Maternal Report of Child's Social Network

		HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
1.	Number of People in the Network (People who take an interest in the child's welfare)	3.0	4.2*
2.	Who Constitutes the Network?		
	Relatives	47.1%	50.5%
	Friends	27.2%	20.3%
	Neighbors	7.8%	8.5%
	Babysitters	8.1%	7.7%
	School-Related	6.9%	7.7%
3.	Interlinkate with Parent's Network	74%	59%
4.	Frequency of Contact - At Least Weekly	79%	83%
5.	Familiarity with Child Since Birth	68%	57%

* $p < .05$

TABLE 4: Demands for Social Readjustment (Holmes-Rahe Scale) and Use of Help in Response to Stress

A. Social Readjustment ("Stress") Scores

		Neighborhoods:	
		HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
Distribution:	Means:	258.42	165.62*
0-149: no crisis		37%	74%
150-199: mild crisis		5%	5%
200-299: moderate crisis		21%	32%
300+: major crisis		37%	16%

B. Sources of Help in Meeting Demands for Social Readjustment

	HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
1. Number of Helpers (X)	3.2	3.8
2. Type of Helpers (Percent naming at least one from the category)		
Percent Naming:		
Family	70%	85%
Coworker, Friend	74%	70%
Neighbors	35%	40%
Professionals	45%	75%
3. Response of Helpers		
Just listened	68%	66%
Asked questions	42%	44%
Told me who to see	24%	18%
Told me to see someone else	4%	13%
Showed me a new way to look at things	34%	16%
Took some action	29%	37%
4. Degree of Overall Satisfaction		
Very satisfied	65%	59%
Somewhat satisfied	15%	20%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2%	3%
Very dissatisfied	0%	0%

* $p < .05$

TABLE 5: Maternal Ratings of Family Stresses and Supports

	NEIGHBORHOODS HIGH RISK	LOW RISK
RATINGS: -5 = very negative to +5 = very positive		
Finances	.09	.21
Family Health	2.00	1.66
Work Situation	2.23	1.91
Chances to Enjoy Recreation	.955	1.66
Child-Care: Availability	2.19	3.04*
Child-Care: Quality	3.00	2.86
Neighbors-Friendliness	2.90	3.25
Neighborhood as Place to Raise Children	.09	1.66*
Help as Parent:		
Family	.89	1.83
Friends	1.55	1.47
Neighbors	.437	1.14
Professionals	1.32	2.09
East/Difficulty Raising Child (note: +5 = difficult, -5 = easy)	2.43	1.29*
Self-Rating as Parent	1.45	1.83

* $p < .05$